

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 1, 4-7 and 9-13.

Double Patenting

Claim 8 is provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-8 of copending Application No. 10/546,455 in view of Exner et al., DE 19953000 A1 ("Exner").

Claim 8 is also rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 7,172,724 B2, issued from Application No. 10/304,963 in view of Exner.

Claim 8 is further rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 2-15 of U.S. Patent No. 6,657,155 B2 in view of Exner.

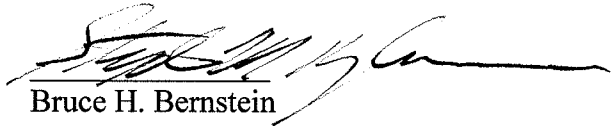
In response, Applicants are submitting herewith an executed Terminal Disclaimer to advance prosecution of the application to allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of record, and allow each of the pending claims. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that an early indication of allowance of the application be indicated by the mailing of the Notices of Allowance and Allowability.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,
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